

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph at page 3, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- The features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings where:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a step;

Fig. 2A is an elevational view of a grip structure in a tread plate of the step shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 2B is an elevational view of an alternative embodiment of a grip structure in a tread plate of a step;

Fig. 3 is an elevational view of a drain structure in the tread plate of the step shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. [[4.]] 4A is a vertical sectional view of the grip structure shown in Fig. 2A;

Fig. 4B is a vertical sectional view of the grip structure shown in Fig. 2B;

Fig. 5 is a vertical sectional view of the drain structure shown in Fig. 3;

Fig. 6 is a plan view of a hole in the tread plate from which the grip structure shown in Fig. 2A is formed; and

Fig. 7 is a plan view of a hole in the tread plate from which the drain structure shown in Fig. 4A is formed. --

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Referring now to Figs. 2A and 4A, each of the grip structures 32 comprises a curved base 40 that is joined to the top surface 22 of the tread plate 14. The base 40 preferably comprises a continuous curved side wall. ~~More preferably, the base 40 comprises a frusto-conical side wall.~~ A plurality of tabs 42 are joined to the base 40 and extend upwardly therefrom. The base 40 and each of the tabs 42 have at least substantially the same thickness as the thickness of the tread plate 14. Preferably, each of the tabs 42 has a substantially angular shape, with a pair of non-parallel sides 42a extending downwardly and outwardly from opposing ends of a free top end 42b. Bottom portions of the tabs are 42 integrally joined to top portions of the base 40. The tabs 42 at least partially define the grip opening 36, which has a diameter "D1", as is best shown in Fig. 4. The tabs 42 are spaced apart around the periphery or circumference of the base 40 so as to cooperate with the base 40 to form a plurality of alternating ridges and valleys, wherein the ridges are comprised of the top ends 42b of the tabs 42 and the valleys are comprised of top end portions 40a of the base 40. The sides 42a of the tabs 42 are joined to the top end portions 40a of the base 40 at bends. Both the top ends 42b of the tabs 42 and the top end portions 40a of the base 40 are slightly arcuate in the horizontal direction. Outer and inner edges of both the top ends 42b of the tabs 42 and the top end portions 40a of the base 40 are preferably uniform in height along their lengths. In addition, the top ends 42b of the tabs 42 are substantially horizontally disposed. The top end portions 40a of the base 40, however, slope slightly inward. The top ends 42b of the tabs 42 are disposed a height "H" above the

top surface 22 of the tread plate 14, i.e., each grip structure 32 has a height "H".

Preferably, the top end portions 40a of the base 40 have at least substantially the same arcuate length as the top ends 42b of the tabs 42. Figs. 2B and 4B show an alternative preferred embodiment wherein the side wall of the base of the grip structures is frusto-conical in shape rather than curved. --